

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CU-04

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

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R 030819Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1369

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8102

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: NEWS MEDIA DEVELOPMENTS

REF SEOUL 8054

1. USIS PRESS SOURCE REPORTS THAT MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS OF ROK NEWSPAPERS HAVE INSTRUCTED STAFFS NOT TO REPORT STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS. SOURCE SAID THIS ACTION IS RELATED TO NOVEMBER 30 MEETING KOREAN PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION WHICH WAS HELD AT REQUEST OF ROKG (REFTEL). SUBSEQUENTLY SOME PUBLISHERS REPORTEDLY AGREED TO SELF CENSORSHIP. ALTHOUGH NEWS MEDIA CONTINUED TO REPORT ON STUDENT PROTEST THROUGH DECEMBER 2, ON DECEMBER 3 TONGA-ILBO ALONE GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO DEMONSTRATIONS.

2. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT DECEMBER 3 RADIO BROADCAST RESOLUTION OF 300 TONGA STAFF MEMBERS PROTESTING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO MAKE PUBLISHERS SIGN PLEDGE OF SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT POLICIES (INCLUDING NON-PUBLICATION OF STUDENT STORIES). MAIN POINTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. DEMANDED GOVERNMENT DESIST IN EFFORTS TO
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PRESSURE PUBLISHERS.

B. EXPRESSED RESPECT FOR JOURNALISTS WHO DO
THEIR DUTY IN SPITE OF PRESSURE.

C. RESOLVED THAT IF DONGA ILBO PUBLISHERS WHO
SO FAR HAVE REFUSED TO SIGN THE PLEDGE DO GIVE
IN, REPORTERS WILL REFUSE TO MAKE UP NEWSPAPERS OR RADIO NEWS.

3. PRESS SOURCE REPORTS THAT PAK KI-PYONG, PRESIDENT
OF KOREAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION WAS ARRESTED
EVENING NOVEMBER 29 AND RELEASED NEXT DAY. REFTEL
REPORTED DECLARATION OF ASSOCIATION CALLING FOR
PRESS FREEDOM AND PAK APPARENTLY PULLED
IN FOR INTEROGATION ON THAT. PREVIOUSLY REPORTED
CHUNGANG ILBO REPORTERS STRIKE LASTED ONE DAY.
STAFF WAS BACK AT WORK DECEMBER 1.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY AND USIS SOURCES INDICATE
THAT GOVERNMENT PRESSURE ON PUBLISHERS HAS
BEEN INTENSIVE PAST WEEK. WE HEAR THAT THERE HAVE
BEEN VEILED THREATS BY GOVERNMENT RE FORCING
PRESS MERGERS AND OF ACTION AGAINST BUSINESS
INTERESTS OF PUBLISHERS IF THEY DID NOT SUBMIT.
ALTHOUGH PUBLISHERS FOR MOST PART SEEM TO BE
ACQUIESING TO GOVERNMENT DEMANDS, REPORTERS
CONTINUE TO RESIST AND CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT'S
EFFORTS TO GET PRESS SITUATION UNDER CONTROL.
UNDERHILL

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